



# NEWS

**Service Employees International Union**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CLEANERS RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT SANITARY CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*– More than \$9 million in Budget Cuts could affect Children’s Health –*

**New York, NY** – Hundreds of school cleaners shared their concerns about maintaining safe and healthy environments at public schools with parents and City Council members across City Hall Park on Wednesday. Already working through shortages of staff and supplies brought on by previous budget cuts, cleaners worry that this year’s proposed cuts; estimated at \$9 million could lead to unsanitary conditions in the schools that may have adverse effects on children’s health.

“Proper cleaning and sanitization are critical not only to the appearance of the schools where our children learn, eat and play, but also to fighting the unseen germs and bacteria that can easily spread amongst our youngsters,” said Hector Figueroa, 32BJ Secretary Treasurer. “With their health at risk, cutting corners on school cleaning is not an option.”

Seven budget cuts over the past seven years have already forced cleaners to maintain schools with 1,000 fewer cleaners, and further cutbacks, which could cost another 240 jobs could drastically affect the quality of school cleaning.

“We are already overburdened and short of manpower. I don’t know how we’d manage further cuts in staff.” said Edwin Figueroa, a school cleaner who has worked at IS 84 at the Bronx for 22 years.

In the midst of budget negotiations, City Council member Daniel Dorm joined the crowd to voice their opposition to any cuts to the school budget, including those in cleaning and maintenance.

“As a former teacher, I know firsthand that without a clean and safe environment in our schools we cannot offer quality education,” said Councilmember Daniel Dorm . “These unfair budget cuts put our children’s health at risk and their future in jeopardy.”

With more than 120,000 members, including 5,000 New York City public school cleaners, 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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